

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAIGON 05869 070814Z

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

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O 070725Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4383

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5869

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS VS

SUBJECT: JCRC UNDERWATER EXPLORATORY ACTIVITY

REF: STATE 093434 (STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE)

1. REFTEL SAYS STATE/DEFENSE FULLY SHARES MY CONCERN ABOUT THE SECURITY FACTOR IN LIGHT OF THE DECEMBER 15 AMBUSH. I WOULD POINT OUT THAT THE LOCALE OF THE DECEMBER 15 OPERATION WAS ALSO PRESUMED TO BE SECURE RPT SECURE. NEVERTHELESS, CAPTAIN REES IS DEAD. IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE INCIDENT WE HAVE BEEN PUT ON VERY CLEAR AND UNEQUIVOCAL NOTICE, PUBLICLY PROCLAIMED, THAT THE NVA/"PRG" SIDE WILL DO EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO PREVENT ANY JCRC OPERATIONS CONTUNUING TO TAKE PLACE. I DO NOT TAKE THIS THREAT LIGHTLY AND I DO NOT WISH TO SACRIFICE ANOTHER AMERICAN LIFE TO ENABLE THE OTHER SIDE TO AGAIN UNDERSCORE A PROPAGANDA POINT.

2. NEVERTHELESS, I UNDERSTAD THE COMPULSION WHICH MAKES WASHINGTON RELUCTANT TO STAND DOWN THE ENTIRE EXERCISE FOR THE TIME BEING. WE HAVE, THEREFORE, WORKED VERY HARD TO DEVISE MODALITIES WHICH WILL PERMIT CONTINUATION OF THE RECOVERY AND IDENTIFICATION PROCESS IN WAYS WHICH WILL ELIMINATE AS MUCH AS IS HUMANLY POSSIBLE THE SACRIFICE OF ANOTHER CAPTAIN REES. IF WE ARE TO JETTISON THESE CAREFULLY WORKED OUT PLANS I SEE NO RECOURSE BUT TO STAND DOWN THE ENTIRE OPERATION UNTIL CONDITIONS EVOLVE TO CHANGE THE ATTITUDE OF THE OTHER SIDE.

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3. I HAD NOT CONSIDERED THE 8 MAY EXERCISE AS AN "OFFICIAL"

JCRC EXERCISE BUT RATHER AS A PRELIMINARY EXPLORATION TO DETERMINE
WHETHER OR NOT SUCH AN EXERCISE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. I SUGGEST
WE PERMIT IT TO GO FORWARD ON THE PRESENTLY ARRANGED BASIS AND,
IF IT APPEARS THAT "OFFICIAL" RECOVERY OPERATIONS SHOULD BE
INSTITUTED, WE EXAMINE THE QUESTION AGAIN.
MARTIN

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NNN

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